Family System

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Family System

by MarcelWorldsmith

Summary

World War III comprised three opposing sides: BRICS, the EU and the ailing United States of America. When the United States withdrew its support from European soil to deal with its own anti-war uprising, the EU fell and BRICS conquered European territories as far as France.

The history of the Old World is taught in every school, lest history repeat itself. During one of these history lessons, Will Graham realizes that her roots reach further away than South Africa. From what she can piece together, Clan Graham planted a family in South Africa all the way from Scotland after World War I. A part of the family relocated to the Lithuanian territory after World War three. What she did not know is that Clan Graham had mixed voraciously with Vikings during the 12th century.

Notes

I have decided to give humans horns (because why not). In this universe, Alphas generally have horns that grow ahen they reach their 20's. As such, Alpha fights are ritualistic and often exploited for sport. The descendants of Vikings are known to have the longest and strongest horns (not for the reason you think). I envision them as sprouting from the area just behind the temple, above the ear in the hairline and resemble Blesbok horns (just less prominent ridges). Obviously, horns add to status.
Also Omegas are a gender on their own-essentially hermaphrodites capable of impregnating others and also becoming pregnant.

Historia

World War III comprised three opposing sides: BRICS, the EU and the ailing United States of America. When the United States withdrew its support from European soil to deal with its own anti-war uprising, the EU fell and BRICS conquered European territories as far as France. The British Empire survived its decline. The Middle-East shut its borders at the beginning of the war and refused to open them even fifty years after the war. The US had become peaceful in the wake of its short-lived civil war and many young Europeans would venture across the ocean to find their feet and return home enlightened.
As commendation for his bravery during the war, Arturas Lecter was reinstated as Count and given to rule over the former territory of Lithuania. Part of his Lordships duties was the handling of trade agreements with South-Africa.
BRICS mandated that member countries integrate to create one culture, keeping the Emperium strong. As such, entire families would move to another member country in service of the Emperium. The Emperium grew in strength through the unity of many-unitatis per multas.
The history of the Old World is taught in every school, lest history repeat itself. During one of these history lessons, Will Graham realizes that her roots reach further away than South Africa. From what she can piece together, Clan Graham planted a family in South Africa all the way from Scotland after World War I. A part of the family relocated to the Lithuanian territory after World War three. What she did not know is that Clan Graham had mixed voraciously with Vikings during the 12th century. She was a direct descendant of the most vicious Omega Viking warlords.
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Will hated this school. She hated the smug Alpha teens, always picking on the small and weird. She detested the fact that she had to hide her Omega smell or be subject to even more ridicule. But what she hated the most was that she was in this rich-people school only because her father was a government worker. She wasn't a charity case and made damn sure that she worked to earn every bit of her state-sponsored education, even when her high marks coupled with her low income made her a favorite target of bullies.

Will trudged to her afternoon-shift flipping burgers and stirring rice every day after school. Every penny she made went straight into Beta pheromone spray. Once in a while, she could afford scent blockers. Her status as a Beta gave her some reprieve from the taunting and she even made a friend, Mischa.

Despite their age difference, Will liked listening to Mischa. Mischa didn't take offence to Will's silence, in fact she seemed to revel in it, telling Will of everything from her art class to what her brother thought of the recent voting in parliament. Will listened to Mischa's opinions concerning her French poetry on their daily bus ride back from school. She is such a passionate child, Will thought fondly as they disembarked.

Will turned to say goodbye to Mischa before walking to work, only to see the young girl being dragged away. A stately Alpha man bundled Mischa into the back of a car before turning his attention to Will. The Alpha got close enough for his breath to wash over her face.
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“Stay away from my child,” he hissed at her. Will folded her shoulders inward and squeezed her eyes closed, anticipating a blow that never came. A car door shut and tires squealed.

Will released the breath she wasn’t even aware of holding. She leaned on the bus stop banister until her heart stopped racing. Racing not from fear, but from the anticipation of a fight.

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Will could easily avoid Mischa over the winter break, but once they returned to school, the young Alpha was practically glued to Will’s side. Mischa must have forgotten what had happened the previous year, even going so far as to single Will out during tea time. Will did miss her.

Will was feeling slightly overwhelmed at the end of the day. Her first day in year twelve already had her anxious for the end of year exams. How many times could she hear the phrase ‘most important marks for university’ before going insane? At least the exam anxiety distracted her daily tormenters enough that they barely noticed her.

Despite Will’s gentle persuasions, Mischa would not leave her. Eventually, Will acquiesced and gave Mischa a hug.

“I wish you a lovely evening Mischa”, Will said into Mischa’s hair.

“You too!’ Mischa rejoiced after releasing Will from the hug but holding onto her sleeve.

Will was suddenly thrust against the bus stop banister, a strong hand around her throat.

“I told you to stay away,” Will recognized the harsh voice as that of Mischa’s father, Ramunas. She felt a knee in her stomach before doubling over, gasping for breath. “Do I have to beat it into you?”

“Father, she only showed kindness to Mischa. Must you-“

“Take your sister back to the car Hannibal,” Will took two steps back, clutching her stomach. She didn’t meet the Alpha’s eyes, but focused on a spot just below his left eye.

“If I see you again…” he turned away abruptly and climbed into the car. Will stifled the urge to spit in its direction.

She squared her shoulders and set off down the road with her head held high, if only to spite the bruise slowly forming under her shirt.
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Sanitatem

Chapter Notes

> Before you call bullshit, I am second a generation Scottish descendant in South Africa. Also, I apologize for the brevity of chapter 1. I was drunk as all hell when I hit publish.

Will woke with a start. She blinked a few times but her vision didn't clear. She rubbed a hand over her face. Breathe Will. Is that smoke?

She leapt out of bed. How did she not notice the fire? She stared as the flames licked lazily around the door. Where was her father and step-mother? The thought spurned her to recklessness. They may not have woken up yet. She had to find them.

Will grabbed her sheet and wrapped it around her shoulders. She used the corner to push down the door handle, revealing the hallway painted in crimson. Will dashed through without a second thought. She kicked her parents' door inwards, reeling backwards as a cloud of smoke came roiling out. She ignored her stinging eyes and pushed forward.

"Oh shit," Will covered her mouth, coughing from the smoke or from gagging she didn't know. Her step-mother was in pieces spread all over the blood-stained bed. Beau Graham sat in a chair in front of the carnage, his face turned away from what lay before him. Will touched his shoulder, then his face.

"Dad, wake up. Dad!" she shouted over the crackling flames as shook him, "Dad, wake up! You have to wake up!"

A stinging in her hands made her pull them back. She coughed again; the room was filling with smoke. She wrapped her hand in the corner of her sheet and thrust it through the window. She cleared as much of the glass as she could before turning back to her father.

"Dad, get up!" she pleaded as she tried to lift him off the chair, "Shit. Dad!"

He was tied to the chair. Will felt her nerve begin to fail. He was tied to the chair and he wasn't breathing.

Her courage utterly failing her, Will climbed out of the window. The tears streaming down her face weren't solely caused by the smoke.

She scrambled away from the house, nearly stepping on a pair of disembodies horns. She squinted at them in the faint light.

“Fuck. What the fuck!” She reeled away with the realization that the horns were real and belonged to her step-mother.

Will couldn’t reach the front of the house, the path blocked by the flames that enveloped it. She took the only remaining option and climbed over the yard wall next to the highway. She stumbled away from the wall, seeing her father bound to his burning chair.

“No, no, no…” she closed her eyes in an attempt to drive away the vision. When it remained behind her eyes, she ran. She barely heard the car skidding across the road until it knocked her off her feet. The pain knocked the fiery visage out of her mind as she lay gasping. The world tilted dangerously as she lifted her head. She tried to focus on the stars but even they seemed to move.

“You stupid child! What were you thinking?” Will turned her head slowly towards the voice.

“Are you going to hit me again?” she said to Ramunas. The world tilted up again before covering Will in darkness.

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Will blinked against the throbbing in her head. The brightness of the room and the mechanical beeping at her side compounded with the throbbing caused pure spiking pain in her skull. She groaned as she rolled onto her side. Moving was a bad idea.

Oh shit, she thought, I’m in a hospital. A fancy one at that. She slowly opened her eyes again, more accustomed to the light. A blurry figure stood up and moved closer. Will squinted at it.

“Will, the police would like to talk to you, but only if you’re up to it,” the figure’s edges slowly came into focus. Will squinted some more. Why was Hannibal here?

“Will, are you alright?” No, she wanted to say, I’m in the hospital and everything hurts, what sort of question is that?

“I’m fine,” she slurred instead.

“Do you want to talk to the police? I can ask them to come back.”

“No, let them in,” Will sat herself slowly upright as Hannibal led a broad Alpha into the room.

“My name is Jack Crawford. I’d like to ask you a few questions,” the man said. Will nodded at him but avoided his eyes, staring instead at his horns. “Do you remember what happened?” Will opened her mouth, closed it again.

“Sort of. It’s…blurred.”

“Did you see where the fire started?”

“No, I was asleep.”
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“So you didn’t see the rest of the house? How did you get out onto the highway?”

“I did. I went looking for my dad and I climbed out the window. I-“

“Didn’t you see your mother?”

“She’s not my mother,” Will snapped. Crawford gave her a thin-lipped smile. Will made herself look him in the eyes. The man had an agenda and Will would be damned if she didn’t find it out.

“Then you have no knowledge of how the incident took place?”

“Mr Crawford, I do not appreciate your tone-“ Hannibal started.

“What are you accusing me of?” Crawford closed his mouth, his eyes widening slightly.

“You think I did this?” Will continued, “You do, don’t you. You think I would set my own house on fire, kill my own father?”

“I think the possibility exists,” Crawford said darkly.

“Mr Crawford, Will is speaking to you voluntarily-“

“Let him talk, I want to know what he thinks,” Will glanced at Hannibal before fixing her gaze on Crawford again. The man shifted but said nothing.

“Well?” Will demanded.

“I think its best that I leave. Thank you for your time,” he turned to leave.

Will seethed.

“No, you don’t get to come in here accusing me of murder and then just leave!” Will tried standing up to go after Crawford. Hannibal immediately pushed her back into the bed.

“Will, you can’t get up yet.”

The door burst open and another Alpha entered.

“What’s going on? You can’t be in here. Get out, you’re disturbing my patient,” the doctor spoke sternly. Will sank back into the pillows with a sigh. The doctor approached her, looking put off.

“How are you feeling?”

“Just my head, otherwise I’m fine.”

“Good, that’s good. We will need to keep you here for a few more days,” the doctor looked over the monitoring machines.

“I can go. I feel fine.”

“Absolutely not. You may have smoke damage to your lungs.”

“I can’t afford this,” Will said with a small voice. She frowned at her hands as she noticed the bandages around them.

“Will, that is what I am here for,” Hannibal said.

Will gaped at him.

“Oh.”

Convaluisset

Chapter Notes

Lyrics from Family System by Chevelle

Tired of your open mouth,
Crawling inside my skin,
Endless pain we never quit,
The fight within that pride's begun,
Say that its too late,
What a man's got he'll learn to hate (hate).
Forget the time I said would,
Replace it with I never will,
Beyond the facts held in your face,
Ignore the facts beyond your nose,
Saying its too late,
What a man's got he'll learn to hate (hate).
Grow up!
Not without meaning,
No response, no revealing,
Just grow up!
Wrong!
Wrong!
Wrong!
~~~~

"Here's your bag sweetie!" the nurse said, handing Will a small duffel that was most definitely not hers. Will turned to say as much, but the nurse had left. Confused, Will opened the bag. Was that a can of Beta pheromone spray? Will's confusion grew but she wouldn't let this stroke of luck pass her by. She applied a liberal dose of pheromone spray before leaving the hospital room to join Hannibal.

"Shall we?" he said.

"Where will I go?" Will asked, "I've imposed on you long enough."

"Nonsense, Will. You are not a burden," Hannibal's voice was so soothing that Will almost believed it, "My family would be happy to host you."

Will gaped at Hannibal again. He gave her a small smile and moved towards the stairs.
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Will followed Hannibal down the stairs and out of the hospital, her eyes on the ground. Will only looked at his face when he held open the car door.

"Th-thank you," she sank into the seat, clutching the bag to her chest as Hannibal circled around to the drivers side. He gave her a fond look before starting the car and easing out of the parking lot.

Will let the silence stretch between them, content to stare out the window as the city passed her by. Hannibal cleared his throat softly before he spoke.

“You already met some of my family. My mother will be happy to assist you with anything, don’t be afraid to ask. My grandfather is a stubborn man but he won’t bother you much.”

“Arturas Lecter? I’ve heard of him.”

“Yes, he spends most of his time arguing with other equally stubborn old men,” Hannibal said as they drove up to a large iron gate covered in intricate designs. The gate swung open gracefully, permitting them to pass up a gravel driveway that lead to an imposing building. Hannibal parked the car and disembarked.

Will paused to look at the stonework surrounding the windows before climbing out of the car. She knew she couldn’t stay in there forever, no matter how much she wanted to. Will moved to enter the house through the impressive double doors when Mischa slammed her into a hug.

“Willow!”

“Hello Mischa,” Will said with a tight smile, “You ran so fast I didn’t even see you.”

“Careful, little sister, Will is still recovering,” Hannibal had a tenderness to his voice when speaking to his sister.

“Sorry,” Mischa let go of Will and grinned up at her, “Can I show you your room? Oh can I, Hannibal, please?”

“Yes, but no running just yet. Doctor’s orders,” Hannibal motioned for Mischa to enter the house.

“You’re not a doctor yet,” Mischa quipped, “Come Willow, I’ll show you,” she exclaimed as she took Will’s hand to drag her into the house. Mischa took Will up an impressive flight of stairs and down a hallway to a dark wooden door.

“My room is down there,” she said, looking down towards the other end of the hallway.

“You can always come see me here,” Will said, recognizing the disappointment in Mischa’s voice, “Let’s see the inside then.”

Mischa smiled at the suggestion and opened the door to reveal a tasteful but plain room. It contained a double bed with drawers and a writing desk. Mischa pulled Will inside.

“Mama already got you some clothes,” she said as she opened a cupboard door. Will peaked inside only to humor Mischa. She didn’t want to see the new clothes. She didn’t want to be in the Lecter’s house. She wanted her own house.

“Willow, you’re so quiet.”

“I’m sorry Mischa, I’m just tired,” Will gave her a soft smile.

“Then Mischa shall let you rest. Come, child,” A delicate, dark-haired woman motioned for Mischa from the door. Will caught a whiff of her scent, as delicate as she was. She was Omegan. Mischa went to her reluctantly.

“Yes Mama.”

“Will, you are welcome to shower and rest. Dinner will be in two hours,” she said before closing the door behind Mischa.
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Will joined the dinner table freshly showered and doused in pheromone spray. The bandages on her hands made handling her utensils cumbersome, but Will didn't complain.

Mischa chatted excitedly about everything, leaving Will free from the burden of small talk. . She ate slowly and observed the members of the family she hadn’t yet met. At the head of the table sat an older Alpha that resembled Hannibal so closely in mannerisms and appearance that Will wondered if there was a there was a time machine hidden somewhere in the house. The man possessed a certain grace that he had passed down to his grandson, but it seemed to have skipped his son. He must be Arturas. The only thing separating Hannibal from his grandfather’s appearance, other than age, was the length of their horns. Arturas’ horns curved through his hair to an inch past the back of his head, whereas Hannibal’s still had a few years to grow.

The realization that Will would never fit in here hit her suddenly. Her own family was a far cry from this one, happy and functional. Will didn’t miss her family, only her father. Beau Graham had been patient where her step-mother would have gotten angry. He encouraged Will without judgment. She struggled to see a way forward without him by her side.

Will was brought back from her introspection by a question.

“Oh, uhm, sorry, I didn’t catch that,” she said, covering for inattentiveness.

“Would you mind staying behind after dinner? There is someone I want you to meet, she is just running late,” Ramunas spoke again.

“Yeah, alright.”

“Who is Willow meeting? Can I meet them too?” Mischa asked.
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“Only if you mind your manners and finish your food,” her mother said.
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Will fidgeted with her bandages after shaking Dr Bloom’s hand. They sat alone in the living room, the rest of the family leaving to give them some privacy.

“Will, I’m sure you know why I’m here,” she said.

“You’re a psychiatrist. It’s not difficult to extrapolate,” Will said to her lap. The Lecter’s must be paying her a lot to be here on such short notice and at such a strange hour.

“Alright then, where do you want to start?”

“Where do you want to start?” Will bit back, catching Dr Bloom’s eye, “Sorry.”

“No need to apologize.”

“There’s something wrong with me, isn’t there,” Will said after a pause.

“What do you mean?” Will stifled the urge to roll her eyes at the question.

“I mean I don’t feel like I just lost my family. I feel like…” Will searched for the words, “Like they died a long time ago and were just waiting for their bodies to catch up.” Will instantly regretted her words.

“When did they die in your mind?”

“I don’t know. I didn’t notice. I just noticed that my family wasn’t alive anymore, not like we were before. I don-“ Will took a deep breath, “When you get back to the one place where you should be cherished and feel safe but don’t get any of that, you think it’s you. They ignore you and it feels like you’re to blame for everything that went wrong. I made myself so small that I didn’t notice when I stopped living, when they stopped living,” the words tumbled out of Will without her permission. There was a door open in her mind, letting everything out. Will knew she had to find it before something dangerous came through, but it felt too good to finally give words to her feelings.

“It’s my fault. I killed them, maybe not physically but I killed their souls.” Will whispered.

“Will, there is nothing to feel ashamed about-“

“Isn’t there?” Will hissed, staring daggers at the doctor, “They’re dead and I’m glad. I feel shame for that, but I’m still glad. Now that they’re really gone there’s nothing keeping me here.”

“Oh Will…”

“I’m defective and I know it.”
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“Will, survivors guilt doesn’t mean you’re broken-“

“It’s not that, Dr Bloom, it’s what I am. I’m an Omega that feels absolutely no obligation to demure to an Alpha, even Arturas Lecter. I have never felt that way. There is something *wrong* with me.”

Initium

Chapter Notes

> Hannibal is about 5 years Will's senior in this universe. He has finished his pre-med degree and is now doing interviews for medical school, that's why he's leaving in this chapter.
> Chapters 1-3 were rewritten and updated on 3/11/2018. I'm terribly sorry, but I would suggest reading them again as I have changed an incredible amount of things (I'm very sorry). If you have come across this fic after this date, ignore this part.

“I would like to do some tests, Will, that might help explain what you’re feeling. Alright?”

“What sort of tests?” Will cautioned.

“A blood test for starters. Just a standard hormone panel and genetics test. It might be helpful to know where you are in your development,” Dr Bloom spoke softly. Will frowned.

“You mean, puberty?” Dr Bloom nodded, “Erm, okay. I don’t see why not.”

“I want to ask you some questions as well, they might make you uncomfortable so you don’t have to answer them,” she pointedly made eye contact with Will, “You can trust me. This information stays between us.”

Will nodded, swallowing.

“Have you had a heat yet?”

“No. My dad told me he was a late bloomer too, so it never concerned me.”

“And your mom?”

“I don’t know. She was Omegan too, that’s all I know.”

“Are you currently taking any medication or have you recently stopped taking medication that could have an effect on your heat cycle?”

“I’m on pretty strong painkillers now and I took some scent depressants a while ago. I couldn’t afford more,” Will looked down at her hands.

“Can you remember the brand?”

“No, just that it was cheap,” Dr Bloom frowned at Will’s answer. Her concern didn’t escape Will.

“Wait, you mean I could have been doing this to myself? With those pills?”

“There’s no way to know for sure without the tests, but yes, it’s a possibility.”

Will stood up and paced in front of the sofa, running her fingers through her hair.

“When do you want to take the blood?” Will said, stealing a glance at Dr Bloom while she paced.

“In the week. I already have you scheduled for another session on Tuesday, I can take it then.”

“Another session?” This time Will did stop to look at her.

“Yes, of therapy.”

“Oh no, no ,no,” Will took a step back.

“Will, Mr Lecter has asked me to-“

“I don’t care, I’m not-“

“Will, if you do not go, I will not let you go back to school,” Ramunas said from the doorway.

Will opened her mouth to speak, but no words came.

“You have been through a traumatic event. I won’t hear any arguments,” the Alpha seemed confident in his authority. Will wanted to whack the airy smugness off his face.

“Will, please,” Dr Bloom put her hand on Will’s arm. Will turned to her, imploring.

“Have you not had a genetic test done? Any self-respecting Omega has one done,” knowing which traits they carried could make an Omega a more favorable mate. Will found the idea of a ‘genetic advantage’ repulsive.

“Yeah, maybe one that could afford it. And this is private! You have no right to listen in!”

“Really? I am paying for this session,” he turned his head slightly, as if mocking Will. Will sneered at him.

“I don’t want your damn money,” she shouted, “Is that what you thought I was after, making friends with Mischa?” Satisfaction bloomed in her chest as she watched the man stiffen. He and Will stared across the room.

“Will, I am so sorry,” Ramunas spoke so softly that Will didn’t hear him at first. Her satisfaction soured as he averted his eyes. Guilt, Will could practically see it radiating off of him.

“Spare me your pity, you had none before,” Will spat at him.

“Before what?” A gruff voice from behind Ramunas. The Alpha turned to look at his father, stepping backwards. Will could see Arturas following his son into the room. Oh great, they’re all eavesdropping.

“Before what, Ramunas?” The older Alpha curled his upper lip, showing his fangs, but even in the face of the threat display, Ramunas remained silent. “What did you do?” Arturas dropped his voice dangerously low.

“It doesn’t matter now,” Will said, attempting to diffuse the situation.

“It matters. It matters because I know my son has a temper,” he glared at Ramunas, “You and I will finish this later. Dr Bloom, when you are finished I will see you out.”

Ramunas followed his father out of the room, his jaw clenched. Will fidgeted with her bandages. She could not stop the guilt for getting Ramunas in trouble crawling over her. She closed her eyes and took a deep breath through her nose, letting it out of her mouth.

“Oh god.”

“Will? Are you alright?” Dr Bloom tightened her hand slightly on Will’s arm. Will only noticed then that she was trembling.

“Yeah, I’m…I’m fine, just the adrenaline.”

Dr Bloom seemed unconvinced, but she didn’t push Will for answers.

“I will see you on Tuesday, alright?”

“Yeah, okay,” Will swallowed around the lump in her throat.

“Here’s my card. You call me if you need anything. I will see you in two days,” she gave Will a small smile and an affectionate squeeze on the arm, “Are you sure you’re alright?”

“Yeah, just…” Will swallowed again, “Need to take my painkillers.”

“Alright,” she nodded, “Sleep well.”

Will made her way upstairs, fatigued. Her bruises throbbed in tandem with her head. Hannibal stood at her bedroom door, his lips parted in concern.

“I heard them shouting. Will, I’m sorry, if I had known my father would-” Will motioned for him to stop.

“Please, Hannibal, I’ve had enough for one night,” she moved to open the door.

“I will be leaving early tomorrow, for France.”

“Oh, yeah, you’re interviewing for medical school. Mischa told me.”

“I will be back as soon as I can,” his brows were drawn in concern, “I should have take you someplace else.”

“You have no obligation to apologize for another’s mistake, Hannibal. Good luck with your interview, and goodnight,” Will spoke softly and pushed open the door.

“Good night Will.”
~~~~

Will walked into the office building, feeling more apprehensive than the week before. Her first formal session with Dr Bloom had not been as bad as Will feared. It could almost be described as amicable, discussing the unbelievable amount of schoolwork Will had to catch up on after drawing Will’s blood for the tests. It was these tests and their results that added extra anxiety to Will’s already anxious state of mind.

“Hello Will, please make yourself comfortable,” Dr Bloom said as she held open her office door. Will entered and quickly seated herself quickly in one of the two armchairs facing one another in Dr Bloom’s spacious office. There was a manila folder on the small table next to Will, inconspicuous in appearance but Will knew what it was.

“Would you like a minute to look?”

“Does it explain what I’m feeling?” Will asked, glaring at the folder.

“Some, yes.”

“So there is something wrong with me,” Will dragged a hand down her face.

“Will, there is nothing wrong with you. Who told you that? Your mother?”

“She’s not my mother,” Will glared at the doctor.

“So it was her-“

“I’m not talking about what happened to my family,” Will’s voice dropped.

“Will, we don’t have to talk about the fire now,” Dr Bloom appeased , “Just so long as you know that we will eventually have to talk about it.”

“Yeah, okay. I just…haven’t processed it yet,” Will averted her glare, focusing on the manila folder again.
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“We can’t rush that but we can’t ignore it either. Don’t avoid the issue, alright?” Will nodded again, chewing her thumbnail.

“If we aren’t going to talk about you family, we could talk about another one. Why don’t we talk about what happened at the Lecter Estate,” it wasn’t a question, and Will knew it. She said nothing.

“Will, we can’t discuss your schoolwork for an hour every week,” Dr Bloom made a good point, Will thought. She scoffed and stood up. When the doctor didn’t ask her to sit down, she began a slow pace around the room.

“Seems even money can’t save someone from the common family dysfunction,” Will grimaced, “Thought it wouldn’t be an issue with the Lecters. They seemed so perfect.”

“In what way, Will? What do you see?”

“Now there’s the question, what do I see? Where do I even start?” Will halted her pace, deep in thought, “Most people look at the Lecter family and see success and happiness, respect for the past and pride in their future generations. You agree?” Will turned to see Dr Bloom nod once. Will kept her face towards the doctor as she continued her pacing.

“I see a confused child who is unsure of her place in the world despite her family legacy to guide her with an older brother who aspires to deny that very legacy. I see a marriage made not out of love but out of propriety. I see an old man who is disappointed in his son and so displaces his hope for a worthy heir onto his grandson,” Will stopped in front of the window.

“What else do you see?” Will shrugged, turning to the window but not seeing what was outside.

“You don’t see love, despite all that?”

“Hah, no, not love. Tolerance, maybe. They have gone so long pretending to talk to each other that they barely each other. The only love in that house is between Mischa and Hannibal. Maybe their grandfather.”

“You got all that from three days with them?” it didn’t sound like an accusation.

“I could get that from less than an hour.”

“Can you tell me how?”

“I just…look at them. I look and they get inside my head with every little move they make, every emotion they try to hide I become them and I just know. Just like I know that Ramunas Lecter is only helping me because I’m Omegan.”

“Will,” Dr Bloom pleaded, “You can’t say that. He has opened his home to you.”

“He hasn’t let me into his house because it’s the right thing to. He let me in because he feels guilty,” Will turned, meeting the doctor’s eyes.

“Guilty?”

“Yeah, erm…you know he attacked me? He thought I was a Beta cozying up to Mischa to get to his money. No offence,” Will dropped her gaze and walked to the armchair, “He only feels guilty because I’m Omegan. I would feel better if it was genuine concern and not biologically motivated *pity*,” she sat down.

“Will, I don’t think it’s safe for you to live with the Lecters-“

“I can defend myself. And he won’t attack me again.”

“That’s the whole point, Will. You shouldn’t have to defend yourself.”

“So where should I go? I’m an underage Omega with no money. If I go into government care, I really have to defend myself. No, Dr Bloom, I’m stuck with them until I’m done with school.”

At that, Will grabbed the manila folder and opened it. She glanced through the first few pages, looking for anything that stood out as abnormal. She was waiting to see something along the lines of ‘excessive abnormalities found, patient recommended to be put into mental facility for life’ but instead found the phrase ‘gene RB1525 active’ on the genetics test page.

“What does this mean?” Will looked at Dr Bloom, holding the page. Dr Bloom smiled, kind and broad.

“Have you ever heard of the Viking gene?” At Will’s creased brow, she continued, “There are groups of people who, throughout history, have done extraordinary things. Things we still revere to this day. And they were all Omegan.”

Will opened her mouth slightly but said nothing, frozen in her seat.

“Do I have your attention now?” Dr Bloom’s smile wasn’t unkind. Will closed the folder and straightened her posture, attentive.

“There are two very famous groups that fall into this category, but the gene was isolated in one group first and so has been named after them. The Vikings and the Spartans.”

Will’s frown deepened.

“You have the Viking gene, and you don’t just carry it, it’s active. This usually happens with an Omega-Omega pair where at least one member carries the gene, but it has been found in select Alpha-Omega pairs.”

“Wait, I thought they were all Alphas? I mean, horns are synonymous with Vikings. I don’t have any.”

“Not yet.”

Will gaped at the doctor.

“Vikings have a secondary phase to puberty, wherein they grow horns and fangs. You will have longer and stronger horns than an Alpha. It’s also why you haven’t had a heat yet. You should have one this year or next year at the latest. As for the feelings you described to me, most of them are explained by you being a Viking. Will, look at me. Your detachment to your family is normal. Also, the fact that your wounds have healed so quickly is also normal. Vikings don’t scar.”

“And the fact that I want to fight with every Alpha that looks at me?” Will folded her hands, hiding the substantially reduced burn wounds underneath the bandages on her hands.

“Entirely normal for you.”

“Being Omegan isn’t enough, the universe really hates me.”

“Will, you can’t keep degrading yourself-“

Will laughed then, something harsh and unnatural.

“Really? I’ve been degraded my whole life for being Omegan, and those that don’t degrade me feel the absurd need to protect me from themselves. The only Alpha that hasn’t let his biology shade his perception about me is Jack Crawford.”

“Who is he? A friend?” Will smiled at this.

“No, he erm… he’s investigating the fire and he thinks I did it,” Will gave a breathy chuckle, “I’m glad he thinks I’m capable. He came to talk to me yesterday after school.”

“What did he say?” Dr Bloom frowned, concerned.

“He tried to apologize for accusing me of murder. I told him to shove his apology because he didn’t actually mean it. Then I told him to go away because I’m a minor without a guardian present. He actually seemed surprised.”

“Will, are you concerned about your behavior towards authority figures?”

“Yeah, but I can’t help it. They piss me off so much and…”

“We will need to work on that. The bad news is that Vikings are susceptible to aggression if provoked. And I think you might have heightened empathy, which makes you even more susceptible.”

Will hung her head, feeling slightly ashamed.

“I’m a double freak,” Will laughed again, the sound bordering on hysterical.

Initium

Chapter Notes

> So, just for the timeline: Hannibbal's school only starts in the second semester (halfway through the year) so he's still around.
> Then, I am on nightshift this coming week. Either there will be lots of writing or there will be none. I'll have to see how much I can do in between sleeping and looking after horses in hospital.

For lack of anything better to do after her session with Dr Bloom, Will made a beeline for the large pond secluded a distance away from the Lecter home. Her homework and assignments and tests to study for floated around in the back of her mind, but right now she didn't care. She also pushed the idea of lunch out of her mind despite not having eaten anything since breakfast, simply too irritated to even want food.

She flopped down on the small patch of grass surrounded by tall sprouting river plants and fumbled with the information booklet the doctor had given her. The bulky bandages on her hands made it difficult to turn the first page. She eventually yanked the damn thing open, took a breath and started reading.

The booklet was politely clinical in its explanation of the genetics of Will's…she didn't think of it as anything else but a condition.

The RB1525 gene was present in approximately 40% of the Omega population. Activation of this gene requires four additional genes to be present, as well as a DNA transcription factor found only in individuals who carry two copies of gene RB1525.

Will skipped all the technical detail, her eyes falling to another heading.

Progeny

Vikings can mate with any of the three genders. The combination of the mating pair affects the secondary gender of their offspring. Mating with an Alpha will most likely lead to…

"Ah, no thanks," Will stopped reading the section almost immediately, flipping to the next page instead. A list titled 'People of note' caught her eye. She skimmed through them, recognizing very few. Amelia Earhart, Gherman Titov, Nikola Tesla and Vincent van Gogh were among them. The fact that two of the four he recognized were somewhat infamous for their quirky and sometimes weird nature did not escape Will. Great, this curse just keeps getting better. Will huffed.

"Will?" the voice behind her made her jump. "I apologize, I did not mean to startle you," Arturas Lecter took a step closer, holding his palms up and slightly to his sides. Will's eyes

snapped from his chin to his hands and back, not saying anything.

“I just came to check if you are alright. You nearly ran out of the house.”

“I’m okay. Just wanted to be somewhere…not busy.”

“This is an excellent spot,” the Alpha gazed across the flat water, “I used to come here in my earlier days too. It made the world seem a little less overwhelming,” Will’s lips parted slightly at his sincerity. Alphas were always so in control, Will struggled to think that overwhelmed was something they could feel.

“May I sit?” Will paused, then nodded slowly. Arturas settled next to her, his legs crossed, “May I ask what it is that made you seek the quiet of the water?”

Will noted, again, how similar this man and his grandson were. They had the same eloquence that made even mundane phrases seem to have hidden meanings.

“I uh, got some news today.”

“Oh yes, the tests,” he raised his eyebrows in mock surprise. Will could feel the beginnings of her own crooked smile creeping onto her face. Maybe that eloquence had an opposing effect when used to discuss things of great importance, Will thought. The man had a way of making the monumental happening in Will’s life seem smaller than it should be.

“Yeah,” was all she said as she tilted the booklet towards Arturas for him to read the title. He pursed his lips slightly, contemplating his words.

“I take it you are unhappy about this?”

“I don’t think so. I’m…confused and maybe a little bit angry. I was never going to have a normal life, was I?” Will let the booklet fall back to the list she was reading before.

“Do you want a normal life?” Arturas gave Will a mischievous look, “Hmmm? Kids and a spouse? No, I didn’t think so,” he said as Will shook her head. He gazed out at the water again.

“I have met a Viking before, absolutely charming man. Fantastic fighter too, I didn’t know anyone enjoyed brawling as much as he did. He once fought three of the biggest men I had ever seen and come through the victor,” Will watched his eyes gloss over only the way old memories could. Will took the companionable silence as an opportunity to study the Alpha from the corner of her eye, comparing him to his grandson without meaning to. Hannibal still had some youthful lankishness where his grandfather had long ago filled into his bones, broad and graying. Will followed the gentle curve of his horns around his head of silvery hair to where they ended in proudly just beyond his head. She wondered if hers would be the same, rich and dark and authoritative.

“Vikings possess phenomenal physical strength and, as you have no doubt found, remarkable healing,” Arturas returned his gaze to the booklet clasped in Will’s bandaged hands, his brows knitting together slightly as he read. “There is a name that is not on that list. I think

you would find her story interesting. The Wolfess was a Viking woman, in both senses of the word. She married a Celtic man to make peace between their people but he betrayed her, selling her to the Romans to free his land from them. It's not a very well-known story, many people say it's only a myth."

"That sounds cheerful."

"Ha, yes indeed."

Will looked down at the booklet again. Another heading caught her eye, 'Myths related to the Viking gene'. She snorted, clapping her hand across her mouth in an effort to stop her laughing.

"What's so amusing?" Arturas chuckled.

"This is too much. I can come to grips with growing horns, but vampires?" Will scrunched up her face, "I'm the inspiration for a lovesick teenager's wet dream."

That drew a deep, joyful laugh from the Alpha, revealing impressive canines as he smiled. Will couldn't help but laugh along softly.

"Can you tell me more about the man you met?" Will asked softly, after their laughter died down.

"I didn't know him for very long unfortunately, I wish I had. Now that I think about it, I can see why the vampire myth gained traction with your kind. His fangs were bigger than mine, and he was at least a head shorter than I am," Arturas curled his top lip playfully, "We met during the end stages of the war. He was a phenomenal soldier, loyal to no one and nothing except the Emperium. He preferred to work alone, the best scout we ever had. Of course, all his accomplishments were claimed by Alpha officers far more cowardly than he. I'm trying to set the record straight, but the man still confuses me."

Will glanced at Arturas, one brow raised. Arturas returned the look, catching Will's eye.

"This is something you have probably already realized, Will, but Alphas are notorious for having power complexes. We want to be in control of everything at all times, but we cannot be in control of something we do not understand."

Understatement of the century, Will thought.

"Instinct is a funny thing. It prompted me to come out here to comfort you as I assumed you were in distress. It is probably the primary motivation Ramunas has for taking you in," Will pulled a face, like she had bitten into a lemon, "Exactly. Your instinct when Alpha's coddle you is, what would you say?"

Will furrowed her brow, "I find it creepy, to be honest."

"Exactly. That is not what we expect at all. We're used to Omega's being grateful whenever we show up. This, coupled with the fact that Alphas will take one look at you and know they cannot physically dominate you, confuses, scares and angers them. In that order."

“Not you?” Will asked cautiously.

“Ha, no, I am too old for all those games. They’re tiresome and childish.”

Will looked down and tugged at the end of her bandages, a lump in her throat.

“I don’t know what to do,” Will’s voice was barely audible.

“What is there to do but be who you are? Talk to your doctor, Will, I know she is a good woman and she’s here to help you,” Will nodded, still not looking up. After a moment, “Now that I have dispensed my daily quota of earthly wisdom, lunch. You better hurry if you are to stop Mischa from eating yours. Hannibal has made her favorite dish.”

Will looked up at that, a small smile tugging at the corners of her mouth. She felt slightly calmer than before. Arturas leaned towards her slightly, winked, and stood up. Will’s mouth spread further as she stood, following the Alpha towards the house. The thought of Hannibal’s cooking brought her appetite back with a vengeance.
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Will followed Arturas into the kitchen. He bent to kiss Mischa’s hair where she was sitting at the small table, alternating between mouthing along to the soprano singing from the antique record player in the corner and shoveling scrambled eggs into her mouth. She motioned for Will to join her, grinning cheerfully.

“You need to finish your food before your piano lesson, Mischa,” Hannibal said busying himself at the stove the stove as Arturas moved to stand next to him. He spoke a few soft words to Hannibal, who nodded serenely.

“Enjoy lunch, Will,” Arturas smiled and left for the dining room as Will dropped her bag and sat on the offered chair. Beside her, Mischa attacked the remainder of her lunch with vigor.

“What would you like, Will?” Hannibal asked, meeting Will’s eyes.

I would like to know what you and your older clone were whispering about, Will wanted to say, but she held her tongue. “I’m not fussy.” Hannibal bowed his head and returned to his work.

“Are you okay?” Mischa asked softly from beside Will.

“Yes, I’m alright. I didn’t mean to scare you,” Will replied cautiously.

“Did you need some quiet space again?” her smile was understanding. Will was grateful that Mischa understood her need for withdrawal from conversation, even going as far as using the exact words Will used to explain it to her in the first place. Will nodded, returning her smile. “Can we have lunch together tomorrow?”

“I’d like that, but don’t you want to spend time with your brother?”

“You won’t impose, Will. I do enjoy your company. Besides, I am not leaving until this semester is finished. We have plenty of time,” Hannibal said, a gracious upturn to the corner
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of his mouth as he brought two plates forward. “Some eggs and sausage.”

Will took a plate as Hannibal seated himself opposite her, a strange feeling in her chest. She quickly began eating, lest unfiltered words fall from her mouth. The burst of meaty flavor around her tongue made her hum.

“This is delicious, thank you.” Hannibal dipped his head in thanks.

They continued eating, an easy conversation flowing between the siblings that Will listened to more than participated in. She savored her meal instead, eating slowly. Hannibal had cooked for them before, sophisticated meals Will had never even heard of. This was something Will could actually make, elevated to art by the Alpha.

Will spied the day’s newspaper on the table. Glancing at the front page, a young dark-haired girl smiled shyly up at her from below the red ‘Missing Person’ label. Will pulled the paper slightly closer to read the accompanying article.

Article by Freddie Lounds
A fifth young girl has been reported missing in as many weeks. Roselle Winn (18) was last seen on Friday…

The rest of the words were lost beneath the fold of the paper. Will was about to turn it over when the kitchen door opened. She recognized the Alpha that drove her from the hospital.

“Miss Lecter, we must be going. There is also someone here to see you, Miss Graham, a Mister Crawford.”

Will gave a small nod, ducking her head to hide her panic. She could only hope that Crawford would not attempt to accost her again.

Mischa suddenly jumped from her chair, shouting as she ran out the door to join the driver, “Bye Will!”

Will gave her a small wave, her mouth suddenly dry. Hannibal regarded her from across the table.

“Would you like me to go with you?”

Will ducked her head. “Please.” Hannibal nodded, giving her a tight-lipped smile. Will took a deep breath, schooling her face to hide her apprehension and stood up. Hannibal followed silently behind her to the living room where Mr Crawford and another officer stood.

“Mr Crawford, any more half-hearted apologies?” Will said in an attempt to break the silence, her heart racing.

The dark-skinned Alpha stiffened slightly, hid mouth curling slightly down. “No, only questions.”

“Please, sit,” Hannibal gestured to the couch behind Crawford. Will felt an itching in the back of her head at seeing Crawfrd again, nagging her in the way that made her panic shrink and

be replaced by something else, snarling in her ear.

“This is Marie Johanssen”, Crawford introduced his companion as he sat down. The Alpha woman was tall, her horns curling elegantly from her crown of blonde hair.

“We have some questions we would like to ask,” she said, her voice short and clipped. Right to business then, Will thought. Will narrowed her eyes minutely as the woman shifted slightly away from Crawford in her seat. She spied Hannibal in his seat, folding his hands in his lap from the corner of her eye.

“Sure, but I have some of my own I’d like you to answer,” Will said coldly, her heart beating faster now not in panic, but in something akin to a challenge. Her head felt lighter, thoughts buzzing away into static as she focused.

“We’d like you to go through the events of the night your parents died,” Crawford said. Will narrowed her eyes at his tone. He wasn’t asking nicely.

“No.”

“No?”

“No. I’d like not to go through it again. I’ve made my statement, refer to it. Have you found anything new?”

“Will, if you aren’t co-operating-“

“That’s not my problem. I see what happened every damn night, I’d like to not relive it while I’m awake too. My story won’t change either, if that’s what you’re after. What have you found?” Will clenched her jaw, meeting Crawford’s icy stare with one of her own. He said nothing.

“We have identified the accelerant used as well as where it was poured,” Johanssen said, shooting Crawford a tense look. He sighed, moving to open his briefcase. He placed a folder on the low coffee table, opened it and removed a page detailing the floor plans of Will’s old house. “It was poured just about everywhere except for this room,” Johanssen drew her hand across the page to circle Will’s bedroom.

Will leaned forward, her lips parting on a sharp intake of breath. She slid the page closer to see the red lines indicating where the flammable substance was found. Her eyes followed the crimson curves from the kitchen, down the hallway to branch off into the small living room before continuing to her parents’ room. Her the lines were thicker, making it seem like some twisted and sickly tree growing along the floors to engulf the house. Only her room was spared.

Will closed her eyes on a sigh, “Whoever it was is putting on a show, and they want me to watch.” She opened her eyes, sliding the page back.

“How so?” Johanssen asked.

“The way my…my step-mother was displayed, that’s the show. There’s a message there. I mean, why do that to her but leave my father basically untouched?” Will shook her head once, “And they wanted me to see it. Why else not set my room on fire?”

“What message?”

“If I knew that, I’d tell you. Either they’re trying to show me something, or they wanted me to die last.”

“How do you know this?” Crawford interjected, his voice trailing tendrils of anger.

“It’s what I do,” Will met his eyes, seeing a challenge there. Very well. She squared her shoulders, steeling herself. “Take you two for example,” she gestured between the two Alphas, watching them glance at each other quickly, “I can see that you two aren’t quite comfortable working together yet, or this interview would be flowing a bit better. I’m guessing she’s here because you’re not getting results, Mr Crawford. Does she know you tried to interview me without a guardian present?” Will glanced between the two, seeing no reaction, “I see she does. Are you here as back-up or as a babysitter?” Will directed her question to the female Alpha.

Crawford narrowed his eyes and clenched his jaw, the slight motions catching Will’s eye.

“Babysitter then.”

“Will,” Hannibal cautioned, reaching out to touch her arm.

“I’m done,” Will said, standing up before Hannibal could reach her.

“I’m not,” Crawford said, rising from his seat as well. Will looked him up and down with thinly veiled suspicion.

“You still think I did it.”

“You’re not giving me any reason not to suspect you,” he returned coldly.

“Any reason?” Will asked, her voice high with disbelief, “What reason am I giving you to suspect me?” She let her gaze drop over the man again, quickly taking in his curled fists, wide stance and clenched jaw. Realization dawned on her then and she almost started shaking with fury.

“You are hardly reacting appropriately given the situation, which makes me suspicious-“

“Acting appropriately, as in, acting like a scared Omega would, like you would expect,” Will spat, curling her own fists and running her tongue over her teeth. She turned abruptly, heading for the kitchen.

“Will. Will!” Hannibal called after her. She grabbed her bag off the floor and returned to see that Hannibal on his feet as well. She walked past him to lean her bag on the table. She fumbled with its zips, sticking her hand inside. She huffed in frustration as her bandages made it difficult to grasp what she was looking for.

“Fuck it,” she tore at her bandages, ripping them off her hands despite the pain. Her right hand, the one more severely injured, slowly leaked blood from her palm as she stuck it into her bag again, finally gripping the manila folder. She tossed it onto the diagram of her house, the top now bearing her own blood.

“Put *that* in your pipe and smoke it,” she hissed. She grabbed her bag and left the room.

Send the pain below

Chapter Notes

I wrote most of this while watching DOOM, please let me know of any mistakes.
The thesis Hannibal is talking about is actually a mini-thesis that medicine and veterinary students have to write (don't know about others). Apparently, you can't be called 'doctor' without having written it.
So much talking! (I'm sorry)
Happy Boxing Day!

I liked having hurt,
So send the pain below,
Where I need it.
You used to beg me,
To take care of things,
And smile at the thoughts of me failing.
You used run me away all while laughing,
Then cry about that fact til my returns.
But long before having hurt,
I'll send the pain below,
Much like suffocating,
-Send the pain below, Chevelle

Will paced up and down her bedroom floor, hands itching and teeth clenched. Her head spun like she had run a mile through a protesting crowd, thoughts boiling over so fast she could barely hold one by its tail for more than a second. A soft knock at the door made her stop in her tracks. She stifled the urge to shout. The door opened slightly and Hannibal leaned in.

“I assume you would like this back?” he said, holding the manila envelope through the crack in the door for Will to see.

Will deflated.

“Yeah,” she said softly, “have they left?”

“Yes,” Hannibal let the door swing open and Will could see he had several items with him, along with the envelope. Will frowned. “May I come in?”

“Uh, yeah, yeah, sorry,” Will shuffled and sucked her lower lip between her teeth.

Hannibal closed the door behind him, his mouth a gentle curve upwards. He moved gradually to sit on the bed, placing each item on the covers individually. Will saw the same newspaper she was looking at in the kitchen, a small medical kit and a cell phone.

“May I have a look at your hands?”

“I don’t need any pity, Hannibal,” Will almost hissed, crossing her arms.

Hannibal blinked up at her, infinitely patient, “It’s not pity, merely concern.” Will set her jaw, meeting the Alpha’s eyes. “I would be a poor doctor indeed, if I didn’t at least check,” he added.

Will sighed and drew her desk chair closer to the bed. She sat down to face Hannibal, holding out her right hand towards him.

“See? It’s not that bad.”

“Regardless, it would make me feel better to treat it,” he said, taking Will’s hand into his to inspect her wounds. His hand was pleasantly warm and Will relaxed her hand as he gently pressed her fingers flat to open her palm. She couldn’t help the slight tug at the corners of her mouth as Hannibal turned her hand over. This close, Will could easily take in his warm scent, noting the difference between its gentleness compared to the demanding heat she usually experienced from her Alpha peers.

“Only being thorough,” Hannibal said with amusement, “it has healed remarkably well. I would like to bandage it for a while longer and maybe it won’t leave a mark.”

It won’t, Will wanted to say, but she held her tongue. She nodded.

“May I see the other one?”

Will brought her left hand forward almost automatically, palm up, “How much am I paying for this appointment, Doctor?” she joked.

“Only an hour of your company,” Hannibal smiled, taking her hand. He froze, his smile sliding off his face, before lifting his eyes to Will’s. She gasped, snatching her hand to her chest. She knew what Hannibal saw.

“Will…”

“Don’t,” her voice barely above a whisper. Hannibal kept silent as Will stroked the thumb of her right hand over the red lines on the opposite wrist. Her eyes darted everywhere except on the man in front of her. “It helps, when everything’s gone out of place. It just brings me back into focus.”

“Have things gone that awry, Will?”

“Yes,” relief sounded as she sighed the word, like the releasing of a great pressure. She took a shaky breath, staring unfocused at the floor between them. “Everything’s gone to shit and I-“ she broke off, “I’m angry all the time. It calms me down.”

“Who are you mad at, Will?” Hannibal ducked down to catch her eye.

“Everyone,” she whispered, “I’m mad at the police for pinning all this on me, I’m mad at my step-mother for…a lot of things, I’m mad at everyone at school for not letting me be,” she paused, closing her eyes, “I’m mad at my dad for being complacent, I’m mad at your father for being an asshole, I’m mad at you for bringing me here but most of all mad at myself for being so pathetic.”

Hannibal said nothing, merely clasped his hands together.

“My dad and I used to go fishing almost every weekend. Food has a different flavor to it if you’re having fun getting it,” Will smiled at the memory of her father teaching her how to tie fishing flies, “My step-mother put a stop to it pretty quickly though. Said it was a waste of money. She said the same about my dog too, so my dad got rid of him. I wasn't allowed to do anything without her approval. Now they’re all gone and I haven’t buried a single one of them,” Will chewed her thumbnail absentmindedly, “I’m probably not going to get into the police force now. Sorry, I don’t want to waste your time with all my nonsense. You probably have things to do,” she ducked her head.

“Will, time spent with friends is rarely wasted. Besides, I have enough credits built up from previous years that I only have research to do. It leaves me with a lot of time for reading, and annoying everyone in the household.”

“What, were you just extra studious while everyone else went partying?”

“Yes.”

Will couldn’t help the laugh clawing out of her throat at the severe expression on Hannibal’s face. “Wait, you’re serious?”

Hannibal merely smirked in answer.

“All right, Doctor Overachiever, what else have you brought me?” Will tipped her head towards the items at Hannibal’s side.

He smiled, handing her the cell phone, “My number is already on there, should you need anything.”

Will gingerly took the phone, taking in its sleekness. The thin silver stripes crossing its back told her that it was solar powered. “I can’t take this, Hannibal. It’s too much,” she held the phone like a venomous snake.

“Will, you said it yourself less than an hour ago, someone out there might want you dead. And anger won’t get you far with someone this dangerous,” Will paused at this. Hannibal tilted his head, raising his eyebrows in anticipation of another argument from her. “You do need one. Now, come closer so I can take care of your hand.”

Will sighed, pocketing the phone but making no move to cooperate.

“As much as I admire strength, there comes a point where it transitions into stubbornness. You don’t need to do this alone,” he picked up the medical kit.

Will huffed and moved to sit next to Hannibal on the bed, giving him her right hand. “You think I’m being stubborn?”

“Unimaginably so,” Hannibal said with a teasing tone as he busied himself bandaging Will’s outstretched hand. Companionable silence fell over them.

“Why am I here, Hannibal? Why did you bring me here?” Will asked softly, watching as Hannibal wrapped soft white cotton around her hand. “Please don’t lie. I can tell if you do,” Will added, almost ashamed. Hannibal met her eyes, but said nothing. “Don’t tell me you felt sorry for me when your father-“

“No, I didn’t,” he interrupted, “In truth, it was how you looked at him. There was a fire in your eyes, growing stronger by the second. I didn’t wish to see it go out.”

“That is by far the weirdest but nicest thing anyone has ever said to me,” Will said with a chuckle. She felt Hannibal holding something back, but didn’t press him. Lies of omission were hard to prove.

“That isn’t entirely how I meant it,” he gave Will a smile regardless, applying tape to the end of the bandage now enveloping her hand and wrist. He gave her hand a gentle pat.

“Oh, I saw you were interested in this during lunch,” he said, fishing behind Will before bringing the newspaper around. She moved slowly to take it, purposefully avoiding Hannibal’s eyes as he leaned closer to her. “This seemed important, better keep it safe,” he added the manila envelope onto the newspaper. Will was starting to resent it.

“Thank you. You didn’t look at it?”

“No, but Mr. Crawford did.”

“Ah,” Will put both on the seat of her desk chair, ”You said time with friends is rarely wasted. Are we friends?”

“I would like us to be. Do you?”

Will nodded. “Will you stay a while?”

“Of course, I have yet to claim my payment for your treatment,” Will huffed at this,“We don’t have hunting dogs anymore, but we do have two horses for the gamekeeping. Would you like to see them?”

Will’s face broke into the biggest smile she’d had in weeks, “I’d love to.”

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Will took lunch with Hannibal and Mischa every day, after which Hannibal would either take Will to another part of the grounds or spend the afternoon reclined on Will’s bed, reading while she studied. The weekend consisted of much the same, occasionally interrupted by
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Mischa wanting to play in the snow. After the first week, Will stopped tensing every time Hannibal shuffled his papers behind her.

"I might be overstepping my bounds, but you mentioned reliving what happened when Mr. Crawford was here. Are you having nightmares?" Hannibal asked one afternoon during their communal studying.

Will turned in her chair and stared at him, her breath stuttering. "How did you know?"

"My room is across the hall Will, and I sleep lightly."

Will ducked her head, "I'm sorry. I didn't mean to wake you."

"You have nothing to apologize for, none of this is your fault," Hannibal pitched his voice low, speaking slowly as not to spook Will, "If you will allow it, I could help pull you out of these dreams, it might help break the cycle."

Will nodded, swallowing around the lump in her throat, "I'd appreciate that," she said over her shoulder.

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After the second week, their conversations became easy and the silences in between less stilted. Will slowly gained more confidence, starting conversations with Hannibal out of her own. They made a game of asking questions back and forth, ranging from Will's favorite subjects to Hannibal's experience working with cadavers.

"What's it about?" Will asked, turning away from her desk to nod at the latest article Hannibal was reading on Will's bed.

"Bonding scars," Hannibal highlighted another line.

"You're doing your thesis on bonding scars?"

Hannibal blinked at Will before pushing himself to sit straighter against the headboard, "I'm investigating the difference between bonding and fighting scars on Alpha's. They're inflicted in almost the same area," he waved a hand across the side and back of his neck, "but their effects manifest very differently."

Oh.

"Could you tell me more?" Will turned to face Hannibal fully.

"Well, to assay bite wounds inflicted to the neck have essentially contrasting effects, we need to investigate the circumstances that lead to them being created in the first place. Alpha-Alpha fights often lead to the victor marking the defeated with a bite. Apart from the humiliation, the mark allows the victor to hold a certain amount of control over the one they championed. The defeated infrequently feels the need to challenge the victor again until the mark fades. This is why rematches between fighters are rare when one had previously bitten the other. Professional fights also do not allow biting for this very reason."
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Will couldn't help the corners of her mouth upturning at the zeal in Hannibal's voice.

"Fighting marks usually occur without a previous emotional relationship, whereas bonding scars almost always require one. If we think about it this way, bonding begins much earlier than many of us realize and the bite essentially only serves to amalgamate the bond. Without the scar, the bond grows weaker and eventually fails. Bonding scars also require both parties involved to be bitten. After marking, the emotional relationship only grows stronger."

Oh. Will's stomach dropped.

"That's about the gist of it. My paper requires a lot more biological and behavioral backup, all with citations. Hence the reading."

"It sounds pretty interesting. How far are you with it?"

"Further than my classmates," he winked. Will rolled her eyes. Dr Overachiever had become a joke between them.

"What happened to your school bag?" Hannibal asked. Will immediately dropped her gaze, glaring at the offending bag. "I saw one of the shoulder straps had broken, but you don't strike me as someone who's careless with their things," he added after Will remained silent.

"Um…my classmates are significantly worse than yours," she spoke to the floor.

"What did they do?"

"What they always do. I'm not allowed to have nice things," she flinched at the memory, "It was the new clothes first. Then the bag."

"Do you need a new one?"

"They'd just break it again. It's fine, I managed to fix it," Will still didn't meet Hannibal's gaze.

"What else did they do, Will?"

She squeezed her eyes shut, mustering her courage, "Ever since I've been here, I've been accused of sleeping with every member of your family except for Mischa. I've been accused of sucking up to her though."

"Is there anything I can do?"

Will shook her head, finally looking at the Alpha, "It's alright. Only a few more months and I won't have to see them again. I'll survive."

Hannibal pursed his lips as Will turned back to her studying.

"If they touch you again, it would be better if you fight back," he said to Will's back.

Will stiffened.

~~~~

Will jumped as her phone alarm rang, the screen flashing *You have 10 minutes.*

“Oh *shit*.”

She jumped up from her desk, the chair toppling over. She dashed past the still made-up bed to the bathroom. She froze in front of the mirror.

“What…”

Instead of her own blue eyes, staring back at her were two swirling golden rings.

“Oh. *Fuck.* Okay, keep it together, you don’t have time for this.”

She stalked from the bathroom to her closet, grabbing the day’s clothes. *Go away, go away, go away* she repeated the mantra as she roughly dressed herself. She habitually went to grab the can of Beta pheromones in the back of the middle shelf, shaking it before pressing the top to cover herself in its blandness, but nothing came out of the can. She shook it again, noting the absence of the usual liquid sloshing on the inside.

“Oh, *come on.*”

She flung the can back into the closet. *Guess we’re playing today on sneak mode, Graham.* She grabbed the chemistry notes she spent the entire night pouring over and stuffed them in her bag. She ran back to the bathroom to brush her teeth, relieved to find the gold had disappeared, leaving her blue eyed once again. She vowed to get iris inhibitors along with another can of pheromones after school. *You should have gotten some sooner*…she shook her head, knowing full well that she barely had the time to play with Mischa, let alone go shopping for that.

She ran downstairs, past a surprised Hannibal to grab her coat.

“Sorry! Big test today!” she ran down the pathway to where the driver waited in his sleek black car, her curls streaming behind her.
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I Will Remember

Chapter Notes

Some Hannibal POV!

Just give me a couple of good days
That I can remember
And I will remember
Just give me a couple of bad days
So I will remember
And I will remember
Filthy
Demeaning
Lovely
Dreaming
Wise man say (Only fools rush in)
Do you dare to come with me
Be the night
We're taking turns to dread what lies around the bend
Be the light
It's good to know my cup
It floweth over
Let me rephrase
We are what we recall
The landscape may change
I climb just to fall
-I Will Remember, The Narrow

~~~~

Hannibal was many things. He was curious, proud, some would say to the point of egotistical, and above being influenced by something as banal as biology. Sniveling Omegas, all they managed to draw from him was disdain. But then, a nearly imperceptible lapse in control lead to the inexplicable, biological urge to defend Will Graham from his father. Hannibal had to admit, his curiosity was definitely piqued.

Why would he suddenly be drawn to protect this Omega when he would happily watch any other bleed to death? Will hadn't even made an attempt to appease his father, not even a whimper. Rather she had seemed ready and capable of ripping out his throat. Curious indeed.

Biology had made it easier for Hannibal to manipulate circumstance, merely mentioning the attack to his father lit the fuse that lead to guilt boiling over into action. His father thought it
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his own idea to pay for the Omega's hospitalization and to provide a place for her to stay. Hubris and shame were such a delightful combination to manipulate.

Again, biology seemed to come through to Hannibal's advantage. Taking a peek at Will's genetic tests had been worth the lying to her face. The more time he spent with her, the more his fascination grew. Being a Viking gave Will an edge, a volatility that, coupled with her instability, would be a delight to exploit. The well of despair she hid behind a layer of aggression only gave him another handle to direct her as he liked. To direct her successfully, Hannibal needed Will's trust. He began by ripping apart her support structure and replacing it with one he was a major part of. Will took some coaxing to recover from the offense, but the house burned so beautifully and mockery of that Alpha woman was a delight. She held herself above her husband and his child much the way Hannibal's own father did over his own family: boasting to cover up inadequacy.

Will had started trusting him, becoming less uneasy the more time spent with him, only uncomfortable when Hannibal woke her from her nightmares, sweating and scared. That self-consciousness quickly dissipated as she showed him a notebook filled with news articles of missing girls one evening, when sleep refused to return to them both. Hannibal was surprised by the depth of Will's theory behind the abductions.

"Look at this," Will shuffled closer to Hannibal on the bed, he finger on the fine newspaper script underneath the photograph of a missing girl, "'Police found no evidence of foul play.' The police aren't looking in the right place. No one vanishes without a trace."

Hannibal gently brought the book closer to himself, turning the pages back to reveal one blue-eyed, brown-haired Alpha girl after another. "They look very much alike."

"Yeah," Will squinted at one photo, "There's something about these girls…maybe…" she trailed off.

Hannibal glanced at her, sleep-skewed in her pajamas. This close, he could easily take in her natural scent, sweet and fiery like cinnamon. Will was a tempting creature. "Yes, Will?"

"Maybe it's not about all of them. It's about one of them."

"Then why not just take her?"

Will paused, "Because she belongs to him, and him alone. He's hiding how special she is. He's escalating, the time between each abduction is getting shorter," Will stared straight ahead, "He's most definitely an Alpha."

"How can you tell?"

Will huffed, "How can't you? No one else has that kind of attitude. No offence," she added shyly.

"None taken," Hannibal smiled, "I am curious, though you do not need to discuss it…"

"You wanna know how I do it," her tone was flat, "how I read people."

“Yes.”

Will shrugged.

“Perhaps it would be easier to demonstrate?”

Her eyes went wide, “What, on you? Most people don’t appreciate me calling them out.”

“It didn’t stop you with Mr Crawford,” Hannibal prompted.

“Yeah, but I don’t care about him. I…I don’t want you to resent me,” she turned her head away.

Hannibal leaned over and gently took her chin between his fingers, turning her to look at him, “I am not most people, I won’t resent you for something that I asked,” he raised his brows, forcing her to hold his gaze, “and I will not force you,” he released her chin

Will exhaled shakily, closing her eyes. After a moment, she began to speak, “You have the utmost restraint, but even in that you give something away. You hide something from the world. Fear? No, anger. Why do you hate your father so much?” she barely whispered her question.

Hannibal stiffened, his mind completely blank.

“I’m sorry.”

That brought him back. “No, Will. I asked,” his voice sounded ragged in his own ears. Hannibal forced himself to relax. He wrapped one arm around her shoulders, drawing her against his side and the tension slowly drained from her shoulders.

Will was becoming a formidable opponent in a game she didn’t know she was playing. Hannibal was finding it difficult to anticipate her, an Omega that did not act like one. Will was likely mentally unstable, at the very least incredibly sensitive and this was the chink in her armor. She gave Hannibal an opportunity to prod this weak spot when she asked about his thesis. Speaking about bonding scars was bound to prickle the Viking in some way, but Hannibal did not expect her to have a nightmare. She had been doing well the days before.
~~~~

Will finished probably the worst test she had ever written with barely a minute to spare. She dragged a hand down her face, staring at the paper until the bell rang. She jumped up at the shrill sound signaling the end of the test period, joining the throng of students placing their papers on the desk next to the door as they left. She twirled her untied hair around her finger, tucking it into her collar. The less it waved around, the less chance of someone catching a whiff of Prime Time Omega. Her coat, smelling strongly of Beta from its previous runs under the pheromone can, was Will’s only other defense against her peers’ olfactory senses.

She knew she was due for her first heat, but she would have appreciated a better warning. Gold eyes the morning of a heat hardly gave her any time to prepare. She had no cramping,
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no slick and no delirium. If she was lucky, this could only be a dramatic flare-up before the inevitable storm.

She purposefully kept her head down, avoiding anyone else's eyes, as she made her way down the hall to the first class of the morning.

So far so good.
~~~~

Will went to hide in the study hall during the break, grateful to find it mostly empty. She secreted herself in one of the booths furthest from the door, intent on catching up on her latest extra-curricular activity now that the horrendous test was out of the way. She pulled a small notebook from her bag, opening it to the latest page where a loose newspaper clipping waited.

Dahlia Woodward was the latest missing girl in a long list of missing girls. Will had picked up on the pattern after reading about Roselle Winn, and evidently so had Freddie Lounds. Lounds had written most of the articles on the missing girls, her disdain for the lack of police action growing stronger with each one.

Each girl had their own two pages in Will's notebook with either a newspaper clipping or a printout of the article, depending on what she could find, adding up to seven girls. Will was pretty sure another would go missing soon. She added her own notes around the articles, scouring social media accounts for more information.

Will glued Dahlia Woodward's article and accompanying picture down, pulling out her phone to dive into the web, her virtual surfboard. The Alpha girl had gone missing earlier that week and Will was intent on making up for lost time. School could really get in the way.

Will caught sight of her reflection on the phone's screen, gold irises glittering on its surface. She sighed, willing the normal, blue to return to her eyes. Iris control was difficult but possible. With luck, she could execute ample suppression the gilded appearance to survive the day.

What luck? She shook her head, determined to break this chain of thought before it rolled down a familiar path. She unlocked the phone, shifting her concentration to the latest missing girl.
~~~~

Biology had one final trick up its sleeve, one that counted in Hannibal's favor yet again. He knew that exposing an Omega of Will's age to a brand new Alpha was bound to draw a hormonal reaction. This stayed his hand when contemplating whether or not to drug her food. Will's step-mother would have had very little influence over her as the two had been living together for an extended period of time.

Hannibal had abruptly exposed Will to three new Alphas and, judging by the fevered sweetness he caught from her as she rushed past him that morning, a hormonal reaction was indeed what he was getting. Will was undoubtedly aware of what was happening, but it remained to be seen if she trusted him enough to call him when the other shoe finally

dropped.
~~~~

Will's concentration broke, the unmistakable rush of slick between her thighs drawing the tendrils of panic into her chest. She hastily packed her things and rushed out of the study hall, heading for the bathroom. Her impossibly high heart rate managed to increase even more at the sight of three Alpha girls in the bathroom. Will barely glanced at them as she hurried towards the stalls, slamming into another girl coming out of a stall.

"Watch it," Marissa snapped, "Oh. Oh!" Will gritted her teeth as Marissa's hands first gripped, and then caressed Will's upper arms. "Don't you smell good," her voice pitched low and sultry and full of bad intentions. Will's skin crawled, "Girls! Look what I caught!" Will heard the rest of her usual band of tormenters approach, her stomach sinking heavily with dread. She wasn't escaping today without a few bruises, at the very least.

"Well, someone's been very clever about hiding in plain sight. Thought we'd leave you alone if you were a Beta, hmmm?" Ingrid said, stepping close behind Will. She dipped her head to brush her nose through the Omega's hair and Will heard the others snigger. She straightened her spine, swallowing nervously. *Fuck*...

"Such pretty eyes. Oh, Will," Marissa snaked a hand into Will's hair, tightened her grip and then suddenly dropped her hand, gasping. "You little bitch!" Will glanced down to see a small scratch, slowly welling blood in Marissa's palm. She brought her other hand up to grip Wills throat hard. The Omega froze, her eyes flitting about in search for an escape, but she was surrounded. Her breath sped up and she squeezed her eyes shut, thoughts racing.

Another hand in her hair, gripping, and Will's mind blanked. She spun around, lifting her arm and caught one girl in the face. She saw blood leaking down her- Abigail's –face. Will took advantage of the Alphas' stunned surprise to shove at Ingrid, sending her crashing against the sinks.

"Where are you going?" Marissa hissed behind her, grabbing Will by the coat. Will struck out blindly, catching the Alpha's jaw. Marissa's grip weakened and Will ripped free. She rushed through a gap between the Alphas to the door, threw it open and dove into the hallway.
~~~~

Hannibal looked up at the buzzing of his phone. The screen displayed a message from Will.

Something happened at school. Can u come?

Hannibal smiled.

An hour later, he walked into his old school, his face the picture of concern. He paused when he saw Dr Bloom ahead of him, having a hushed argument with one of the office staff. Will must have contacted her as well, but Hannibal hoped that doctor was here on an unrelated matter. He drew closer, hoping to overhear her conversation.

"I know you have a procedure, but Will is my patient-"

“Ma’am, you will have to wait-“

“I have been waiting. I need to see my patient.”

Hannibal abandoned his tactic of placid concern for one of aggressive apprehension, “Where is she?”

They both turned to look at him, startled.

“Hannibal, why-“

“Will sent me a message saying something happened. Where is she?” he raised voice, drawing closer to the Beta staff member. The man stuttered. Hannibal pushed past him to the office door.

“Hey, you can’t go in there!”

Hannibal opened the door, revealing a small waiting room. He could smell Will here, but didn’t see her. He crossed the floor to another door and opened it.

Will looked up from the chair where she was holding her knees to her chest. Her eyes flashed a brilliant gold. Hannibal was tempted to stand and admire the Omega’s distress, instead he rushed to her and dropped to his knees in front of her.

“Are you alright?” he held Will’s gaze. She gave a small nod, her bottom lip trembling.

“Oh Will!” Dr Bloom stepped closer to her.

“I’m alright,” Will’s voice was hoarse. Had she been crying? Hannibal could smell the faint bitterness of distress underneath the aroma of heat.

“Who are you? You can’t be in here!” Hannibal turned to regard the Alpha man at the door, recognizing him as the vice-principal, Mr Muller.

“I am Will’s therapist, Dr Bloom.”

Mr Muller glanced at her, “Why are you here?”

The Beta straightened, “Will asked me to come.”

The Alpha scowled at Will, “Our students are not allowed phones during school. It seems Will is not content with fighting in school, she has to break more rules.”

“I didn’t start the fight, how many time must I tell you?” Will almost shouted.

“You injured three other students. And you being here,” Mr Muller nodded towards Dr Bloom, “is against our procedure!”

“And leaving an underage Omega no way to contact a guardian while on the cusp of a heat is illegal!” the doctor clenched her jaw as the Alpha gasped at her.

“I didn’t notice-“

“Yes you did,” Will hissed, “and you wanted to use heat-amnesia to your advantage, but I will remember,” Will bit out the end of her sentence, giving the man a gilded glare.

“You must be either stupid or ignorant,” Dr Bloom said, stepping into the Alpha’s space, “I will be taking Will home.” Hannibal couldn’t help the smile at the Beta’s display. Dr Bloom had steel in her spine.

“You can’t! Will would have to go for a disciplinary!” Mr Muller said weakly.

Hannibal stood up and looked the man in the eye, “Please send us the details, Mr Muller, and we can agree on a date as soon as Will’s heat has passed,” he kept his voice polite but to the point.

He put an arm around Will’s shoulders as she stood up. She pressed close to him, gripping the back of his jacket with a trembling fist. The spicy aroma of heat coming from the Omega was tinged with something astringent that could easily be mistaken for distress. This close, Hannibal could discern the sharp subtle smell of anger.

Twisted Transistor

Chapter Notes

I'm so sorry for not posting earlier, life tried to karate chop me in the throat.
There now exists a Tumblr with all the songs on there.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Hey you, hey you, devil's little sister
Listening to your twisted transistor
Hold it between your legs
Turn it up, turn it up
The wind is coming through
Can't get enough
A lonely life where no one understands you
But don't give up because the music do
Because the music do
And then it its reaching
Inside you forever preaching
Fuck you too
Your scream's a whisper
Hang on you
Twisted transistor
Hey you, hey you, finally you get it
The world ain't fair, it'll eat you if you let it
And as your tears fall on
Your breasts, your dress
Vibrations coming through
You're in a mess
A lonely life where no one understands you
But don't give up because the music do
Hey you, hey you, this won't hurt a bit
This won't hurt a bit, this won't hurt
Says who, says who?
Anesthetize this bitch
Just let me be
Between you and me don't fit
-Twisted Transistor, Korn

Will remained stiff, relinquishing her grip on Hannibal's jacket only to get in the car. Hannibal drove and Will fumed in the passenger side, twisting her hair in her fingers and

rubbing the strands together. Dr Bloom followed in her own car.

“How are you feeling?”

“My skin burns,” Will stared past her reflection at the swirling pastel sky, breathing shallow. She was sweating, slick sticking to the inside of her thighs.

“Some discomfort is to be expected,” Will snorted at that, “This is normal for you, Will.”

“I don’t think alternating between wanting to kiss you and wanting to bite your throat out qualifies as normal,” Will hissed. Both scenarios were equally terrifying and she could imagine them both in vivid, blood-streaked, tongue-twisted detail. The more she thought about it, the harder is became to differentiate the two scenarios. She immediately turned her head back to the window, curling away from the Alpha. Her heat-sensitive nose filled with eu de Hannibal, she clenched her fists against the urge to pull him closer.

“Hannibal…” Will started, “you know that envelope I gave to Crawford?”

“Yes. I know, Will,” she looked over to see him give her bemused smirk, “Your scent is slightly different from other Omegas. And I am training to be a doctor.” Well, that saves her a lot of explaining that would no doubt have been accompanied by severe blushing.

She still wanted to bite him.

After an eternity of suppressed urges, they arrived at the Lecter home. Will twisted her hair tightly and shoved it into the back of her shirt. Just a little longer, she thought as she climbed out of the car. She ducked her head against a sudden cold wind, carrying small water drops to drizzle into her face as she hurried into the house.

“Will, we need to talk about what happened,” Dr Bloom’s voice caused Will to pause halfway up the stairs.

“What? *Now?*”

“If you aren’t feeling up to talking it out, give me the short version instead. You injured three people, Will, you broke another student’s nose. The school is demanding answers.”

“Well the school can get fucked. They never care when it’s not an Alpha that got hurt.”

“Will,” Hannibal came to stand next to the Beta at the foot of the stairs, his voice sympathetic. Will felt an uncontrollable rage, fueling words she would have rather left unsaid, buried and ignored.

“You want the short version? They came at me, because of this,” she pointed at her eyes, glowing gold, “they cornered me and then they touched me, like they always do. They always leave bruises and I never fight back. I didn’t mean to hurt anyone,” she squeezed her eyes shut, her voice thick, “but they…” they pulled my hair and told me I smell nice, she didn’t say.

“Will, who else has hurt you like this?” Hannibal’s spoke low, his voice full of restrained anger.

Will ‘s eyes went wide. No, he can’t know. She turned and bolted up the stairs, hearing Hannibal follow. She put her hand on the door handle just as Hannibal grabbed her other wrist and she turned to face him, yanking.

“Let go of me!” she shoved him, hard, “Don’t fucking touch me,” Hannibal stumbled back, giving Will the opportunity to slip into her room. She locked the door, the click ringing down the hallway.

~~~~

Hannibal looked at the door, taken by surprise. What an unpredictable creature. He had expected Will to be scared, needy, to at least want to stay close to him, instead of furious and capricious. He should have expected slight resistance at the very least; given the way Will’s anger had seeped into her scent, thickening it. Hannibal licked his lips.

Dr Bloom tried the door handle, “Will?”

“She locked it.”

The Beta looked at him, then back at the door. “Will, open up!”

They both heard the bathroom door close. Dr Bloom tensed and Hannibal sighed.

“There should be a spare in the kitchen,” Hannibal walked down the corridor, leaving the doctor to stand guard. He found a spare set of keys for Will’s room in the small safe hidden in the pantry and headed back up the stairs. Dr Bloom shifted her weight anxiously as he approached.

“I’m having a hard time getting through to Will. She won’t tell me what happens at school. Do you believe what she said?”

“Yes, and I have also seen the bruises she spoke of, but I don’t believe they were all caused by her classmates,” Hannibal inserted the key and, hearing its counterpart drop out of the keyhole on the other side, unlocked the door. Beside him, Dr Bloom put a hand over her mouth and closed her eyes.

“Who else could have…? Why won’t she talk to me,” she took a shaky breath.

“Will distrusts authority figures and I can’t say I blame her for it,” the door swung open. Hannibal purposefully neglected mentioning Will’s tendency to self harm. It was told to him in confidence after all.

Dr Bloom stepped up to the bathroom door, pushing the handle down in a manner that bordered on frantic. “Damn it. Will, please open up!”

She put her ear on the door, frowning. Hannibal came up behind her to do the same. He could the faint clicking of metal and Will’s disjointed voice, too faint to make out words.
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Hannibal straightened, “Unfortunately there’s no spare key for this door.”

“We need to get in there Hannibal, I’m scared she might hurt herself. I think she’s having an episode,” Dr Bloom whispered, her head still pressed to the door. Yes, she might hurt herself, and Hannibal was curious to see the damage, but the Beta’s concern inconveniently wouldn’t allow that.

“In that case it would be moot to try and talk her into opening the door,” Hannibal let out a harsh breath, contemplating the damage to the doorframe. “I suppose we have no choice,” he motioned for the doctor to stand clear.

Hannibal set his jaw in a grim line, taking a large step to thrust his shoulder into the door. On the other side of the door, the key clattered to the tiles on the second thrust. The frame cracked on the third thrust and Hannibal grunted with determination at the fourth. The frame gave way, wood splintering to let the door swing wide.

Will stood facing the mirror, snipping off the last long curls on her head with a small scissor. She was surrounded by her own brown tendrils, scattered over the sink and floor.

She met Hannibal’s eyes in the mirror with a glinting, obstinate gaze as she cut the last of the long strands, letting it slide to the floor. Dr Bloom gasped behind him. Hannibal read the message in her eyes: *this was a weakness they will no longer exploit.*

Pity, Hannibal had liked her thick hair, but the short cut was a good look on her.

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Will sat on her bed with a knee drawn up beneath her chin, tracing a finger around the edge of the plate that held half a slice of toast. Hannibal had baked the bread himself. Her skin felt marginally less tight than at school.

“How are you feeling?” Dr Bloom asked from the desk chair. Not that question again.

“I feel like I’m keeping you from your other patients,” Will snapped.

“Would you please worry about yourself for a second?” she asked, not scolding. Will shifted anyway, glancing at Hannibal where he sat on the side of the bed. She couldn’t help biting her bottom lip at the lock of silky hair hanging down his forehead, his horns crowning his head. She forced her eyes back to the Beta, running her hand through the longer curls on top of her head to the stubble at her neck. She didn’t regret cutting it.

Doctor Bloom’s phone vibrated, and she scowled at it.

“I’m tired. But I don’t know if I’ll sleep.”

“Perhaps a sedative?” Hannibal directed his question at Dr Bloom

She frowned, “Something light. Only if you want, Will.” Will nodded.
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The phone buzzed again and the Beta set her jaw as she stared daggers at it. “The parent’s of the other girls involved are demanding a disciplinary. They’ll have to wait.”

“I want it over with. Waiting makes everything seem worse than it is,” Will didn’t meet her eyes, “I’m sorry. I…I would have taken precautions but…”

“None of this is your fault. First heats are unpredictable. I’d put the severity of your pre-heat down to stress.” Will drew both her knees to under her chin. Stress she had plenty of.

“Severe enough to convince the school principal, at least,” Hannibal smiled, taking the plate from beside Will, “I’ll be back with something to help you sleep in a moment.” He closed the door behind him, and Will could breathe a little easier. The distinctive Alpha smell was distracting to say the least. Will rubbed at her eyes.

Dr Bloom spoke softly, “You do know what to expect from this?”

“In theory. I read the book you gave me. Limited heat amnesia sounds useful but that just means I’ll remember being confused,” Will sucked her bottom lip into her mouth.
“There’s something else I have to ask you, you don’t have to answer now but we will have to talk about it.”

“Yeah okay.”
“Hannibal mentioned the possibility of someone else hurting you, or was it just these girls?”

Will worked her jaw, anger flaring in her breast, “Yeah, my step-mother wasn’t content to just take everything I liked away from me, she had to shove me around too.”
“Did it escalate?” Dr Bloom asked softly. Will shook her head.

“Just a few more months and I would have been rid of all of them. I was coping, you know? I could hide the marks and she never did permanent damage. I usually go someplace quiet, in my head, my dad and I go fishing whenever...it worked. I didn’t lash out at anyone.”

“But this time you did,” Will made a small sound, “Why?”

“I’m not sure. But someone touched my hair and all I could think about was her and how she…and I just snapped. I didn’t mean to.” But it felt damn good, Will didn’t say.

“Will, could it be possible that your general disdain for Omegas stems from your father’s failure to protect you?”

Will stared at the Beta, jaw slack. She shut her mouth after a second. She wanted to argue, but no words came floating out of the swamp in her mind. Will dragged her shaking hands through her hair again and again, pausing over her temples on the third time.

“It’s alright Will.”
Will brought her hands forward, then back to her temple. What the hell is that? She felt around the sharp knobs-

She looked up sharply at the doctor, her mouth open but no sound escaping.

“Will?”

Will motioned to her head, “I can’t hide what I am much longer, can I?” she said a little breathlessly.

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The sedative did nothing but hold Will down during her nightmare. It is one she has had before, but this time she didn’t wake up when she found her father bound by burning ropes, dead.

Hands from behind dragged her down into her own chair. Her heart raced in panic but in the way of dreams, she could hardly move. The landscape changed to what she recognized as the garden of her old house. Her step-mother’s horns lay on the grass, just as Will found them. Pain bloomed behind her eyes, growing with every throb of her heart as she watched those horns shrink and rot.

With the pain came the unfamiliar but unmistakable weight of horns growing from her skull like branches. Her teeth grew long and sharp, cutting her tongue and she tasted blood as it ran over her lips and down her chin. She stood surrounded by fire and roared into the night

Will woke, gasping with slick-slippery thighs and *so fucking hard.*

~~~~

Will envied normal Omegas their lucidity during heat. One moment she was desperate for touch, the next she wanted blood between her teeth. She slept poorly, persistent dreams of fire and death and horns waking her frequently. Hannibal’s mother, Simonetta, brought her food and told her where the spare sheets were and Will was grateful that the woman smelled so definitely Omegan that Will felt only a miniscule urge to bite her.

She spent three days behind a locked door, getting off with any means necessary, even going so far as to bite her own forearm in the hopes that the metallic taste of blood would take the edge off. It just made things worse.

When she wasn’t lusting after blood, Will pumped music through her headphones as loud as it could go. The bass guitar and growling of heavy metal made her feel vindicated and powerful where recent happenings seemed to have taken her control from her. It also served as a distraction.

In lieu of talking to Hannibal face to face after a nightmare, they took to texting instead.

W: thank you

H: I don’t know what you’re referring to.

W: yes you do
your mother told me you spent a lot of time on it
it was great, so thank you

H: You're welcome. Would you like another slice?

W: please

H: I hesitate to bring this up now, but the school has contacted me.
They request that the hearing take place as soon as possible.

W: good
I want it done

Reading schoolwork was not a strong enough distraction, but the internet could divert her attention for the better part of an hour if she found the appropriately morbid murder to peruse. She filled her head with at least a centuries' worth of serial killers and cold cases, some even gruesome enough to transport her far away. She was however drawn to more recent crimes, constantly checking for updates in the cases of the missing girls.

W: (link enclosed)
there was another one, but they have a body

H: This isn't appropriate reading material for someone in your condition.

W: come on
did you read it?
he put her back where he found her

H: I read it.
Yes it seems he has.
I'm curious as to how Freddie Lounds gained access to this information so quickly.

W: maybe she's sleeping with one of investigators

Will added the latest missing girl, now a confirmed murder victim, to the list in her book. Elise Nichols was the eighth girl she had penned down. Hopefully her body gives the police a chance to catch him and hopefully it gives Will more insight into his mind.

She woke on the fourth day, blood-tinged slick covering her legs and she knew the heat had finally reached its end. She showered and crept back into bed, the exhaustion tugging at her bones not enough to keep her from logging on to Freddie Lounds' new website, Tattlecrime. The journalist had started it following her alleged dismissal over the backlash she received after covering the Elise Nichols story.

This website had no rules, and Lounds took full advantage, her articles more conjecture than any sane news agency would allow. And yet, the website had grown overnight. Will followed the link to the latest Nichols article, not expecting her entire phone screen to be taken over by the hauntingly peaceful photo of a young Alpha girl seemingly asleep in her bed, stark red dollops on her white nightshirt.

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“Senelis,” Arturas looked up from behind his desk as Hannibal rapped on the study door, “Do you have a moment? Will would like to speak to you.”

“Ah, yes, come in,” Arturas put down the piece of metal he was cleaning. Will shuffled to a chair and kept her head down as she sat. She fidgeted with intertwined fingers. Hannibal leaned against the open door behind her.

“I want to apologize,” she spoke softly, “for the bathroom door.”

Arturas steepled his hands under his chin, “You didn’t break the door,” he flicked his gaze up to his grandson. Hannibal crossed his arms over his chest.

“No, no don’t blame Hannibal. It was my fault,” the Omega almost glared at Arturas for a moment before she ducked her head, running a hand through her cropped hair. Her hair was short enough to reveal two small sharp horns. They were growing fast.

Arturas narrowed his eyes at both Hannibal and Will, deliberately stretching the silence. “Hannibal did explain what happened. I think you are both to blame,” Hannibal dropped his gaze, “I am not mad at you but I would prefer it not to happen again, alright?”

“Yeah,” Will swallowed thickly.

“This house is very old, perhaps this incident could be the start of a much needed renovation, eh?” Arturas gave Will a smile. Her answering smile was smaller but he knew he had put her at ease. “Next weekend you and Mischa will have the run of the old place. The regional governor is hosting his annual charity and we will be attending.”

“Hannibal too?” Will turned to spy him behind her. The boy gave her the kind of smile he usually reserved for his sister.

“Yes, I will be going. You two can make a weekend of it.”

“Mischa will love it,” Will returned his smile, albeit crookedly. The Omega was terribly charming in her innocent way. “Is that an antique?” She asked, nodding at the disassembled pieces scattered in front of Arturas.

“Yes. This was Molson Verger’s preferred sidearm during the war,” he glanced down at the gun’s scattered parts, “It’s a very interesting piece of history.” He began assembling the parts.

“We were told that he shot you when you went to stop him,” Will spoke with caution, as if to probe the topic of the gun for any traps.

“Yes, he tried to kill me but the bullet hit my shoulder,” Arturas motioned with one hand and slotted the last piece together to complete the gun, “Would you like to hold it?” He held the gun between them for Will to reach.

“Are you sure?” Something in Will’s voice made him pause.

“You want to be a police officer, yes? Are you frightened of guns?”

“No, but this is…different,” Will looked away, frowning.

“Will?”

“I…I don’t-“ Will huffed, squeezing her eyes shut, “The way you look at it, it’s not sadness but it’s close.” Will met his eyes briefly before flicking down to the shining gun. “He didn’t intend for you to die, at least not immediately. He wanted something from you.” Arturas stared in shock. He glanced at Hannibal who gave him a small shrug. The boy had told him Will was perceptive, but he did not expect this.

“I’m sorry.”

Arturas cleared his throat, “No need to apologize my dear. You see more than you are given credit for.”

“People still don’t appreciate their secrets being exposed.”

“This is no secret,” the Omega dropped her shoulders, tension draining from them, “He had captured Emperial men, I’m sure you know this,” Will dipped her head in acknowledgement, “but what is not common knowledge was what he was doing to them. Staged Alpha fights for entertainment.”

“He wanted you to watch,” her voice was barely a whisper.

The Alpha nodded, “He also delighted in my pain, which was ultimately his downfall. The man escaped but I was able to rescue my men.”

“I should have done my history essay on you.” Arturas laughed and the mood became noticeably lighter.

“Speaking of school, I’ve seen your marks. Hannibal has competition.”

Will ducked her head, “I’d rather talk about war.”

“Talking about the past is easy because it’s predictable. The future is notorious for its surprises.” They both knew that he was talking about the upcoming disciplinary. Arturas sighed, “I don’t want you to get your hopes up Will, tomorrow may not go well.”

“But it wasn’t my fault-“

“I know, and I believe you were right to defend yourself, but-” Will tried to speak but shut her mouth at the pointed look Arturas gave her, “despite laws being changed many years ago, there is still a prejudice against Omegas, and even more so against you.”

Will scowled, “This isn’t fair.”

“Life rarely is my dear.”

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Will walked down the corridor, staring straight ahead as whispers swelled around her. Whoever organized the disciplinary was a *fucking asshole*, making Will walk to other end of the school during break time. The only good thing seemed to be that everyone wanted to stay out of her way.

“Hey, Graham!” Mostly everyone. Will stopped dead, turning slowly to meet the Alpha boy’s eyes. “Nice horns,” Will narrowed her eyes slightly and looked him up and down. He elbowed his friend, “Michael is having a party on Friday, wanna come?”

Will was momentarily startled. A party? The last time she was at a party, she had just learned to walk. Fuck it, it couldn’t hurt. “Sure. I might get suspended today so…” she shrugged.

“Sweet. We could celebrate,” Michael gave her half a smirk, his eyes roaming over her quickly. Alphas.

Will nodded, “See ya,” she continued to the conference room, a rebellious spring in her step.

The door was slightly ajar and Will could hear muffled voices inside. She took a deep breath to steady her racing heart. She kept telling herself that she doesn’t care what happens, that this doesn’t matter. She thought she had no hope for the outcome but that was a lie. Here goes nothing. She pushed the door open.

Chapter End Notes

There should be one or two more chapters in this part, depending on how the writing goes. I've already mapped out part two (yay!)
Please let me know of any mistakes, I wrote most of this while watching DOOM

Please drop by the Archive and comment to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!